

## Texas Child Passenger Safety Laws

(Effective 09/01/2009)

Applicable to all passenger vehicles: passenger car, light truck, sport utility vehicle, truck, or tractor truck. Update: 15-passenger vans are now considered passenger vehicles under the law.

### CHILD PASSENGERS, TRC 545.412

A person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle, transports a child who is younger than eight years of age, unless the child is taller than four feet, nine inches, and does not keep the child secured during the operation of the vehicle in a child passenger safety seat system according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety seat system.

### ALL OCCUPANTS, TRC 545.413

All occupants must be restrained in a safety belt regardless of position in the vehicle, if position is equipped with a safety belt.

### PICK-UP TRUCKS AND TRAILERS, TRC 545.414

A person commits an offense if the person operates an open-bed pickup truck or an open flatbed truck or draws an open flatbed trailer when a child younger than 18 years of age is occupying the bed of the truck or trailer.

### MOTORCYCLES, TRC 545.416

An operator may not carry another person on a motorcycle unless the other person is at least five years of age. (Unless in attached sidecar)

### UNATTENDED CHILD IN VEHICLE, PC 22.10

A person commits an offense if he or she intentionally or knowingly leaves a child in a motor vehicle for longer than five minutes knowing that the child is:

1. Younger than 7 years of age and;
2. Not attended by an individual in the vehicle who is 14 years of age or older.

### EXEMPTIONS AND DEFENSES TO PROSECUTION

For exemptions and defenses to prosecution please refer to specific traffic or penal code.



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Revised 04/2011

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## 4 Types of Safety Seats

Read seat labels for specific weight and height limits.

### Infant-Only Safety Seat

Fits until infant reaches maximum weight if head is at least 1" below top edge of seat. **Must** be installed with infant facing back of vehicle.



### Convertible Safety Seat

Can be used rear-facing or forward-facing. Use until child reaches maximum weight or height limits. Rear-facing is required until age 1 (recommended until age 2).

### Forward-Facing Safety Seat

Child **must** be at least age 1 (recommended age 2). Harness fits child up to 40 lbs or more if ears are not above top edge of seat.



### Belt-Positioning Booster Seat

For children who outgrow safety seats with a harness. Most children need a booster from about age 4 until at least age 8 – 12 for proper fit of belt.

### Quick Checklist for Visible Errors

These dangerous errors are easy to spot:

- Child riding unrestrained or sharing belt
- Rear-facing infant in front of air bag
- Child riding in front seat
- Infant facing front of vehicle
- Harness loose or not on shoulders
- Safety seat not attached to vehicle or visibly loose
- Shoulder belt under arm or behind back



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